

John Verros

Note: * Revision Pages
included.

MARY HARTMAN

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EPISODE #118

by

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FINAL DRAFT
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VTR DATE:

CAST OF CHARACTERS

MARY	LOUISE LASSER
TOM	GREG MULLAVEY
LORETTA	MARY KAY PLACE
CHARLIE	GRAHAM JARVIS
MARTHA	DODY GOODMAN
BETTY McCULLOUGH	VIVIAN BLAINE
MERLE JEETER	DABNEY COLEMAN
JIMMY JOE JEETER	SPARKY MARCUS
BILLY TWELVETREES	JOHN VERROS

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ACT ONE

McCULLOUGH DEN, SHORT TIME AFTER #117, EARLY EVENING

BETTY, SOLA, WORKING ON HER CHARTS.
MOMENT.

SFX: DOOR OPENS -- OFF

TOM'S VOICE

Hello? Anybody home?

BETTY

Tom?

TOM'S VOICE

Yeah.

BETTY

Come in. I'm in the den.

SFX: DOOR CLOSES -- OFF

TOM ENTERS FROM INTERIOR ROOM. HE'S
SOBERED UP SOME, BUT HE'S STILL
TIPSY.

TOM

Hi. Sorry to barge in.

BETTY

(PLEASANT) It's quite all right.

TOM

I just want to pick up the dirty laundry
I left here.

BETTY

(SMALL SMILE) It's not dirty any more.
I washed it.

TOM

(APPRECIATIVE) Gee, thanks. You really
didn't have to do that, though.

BETTY

(IT WAS NOTHING) Oh, I just threw it in
with some things I was doing for Howard.

TOM

Well, thanks. I really appreciate that.
Saves me the trouble of taking it down
to the laundromat. Which is something
I haven't done for a long time but I
guess I better start getting used to again.

BETTY

I take it that means your reconciliation
with Mary hasn't worked out.

TOM

That's putting it mildly.

BETTY

(SYMPATHETIC) What are you going to do,
Tom? Where're you going to live?

TOM

(IN THE DUMPS) I don't know. Find a
room or a cheap motel or something. You
haven't got a drink around, have you, Betty?

BETTY

Do you really think you ought to have one?

TOM

I need one. Bad.

BETTY

All right -- you know where the liquor is.

Help yourself.

TOM

Thanks.

HE PROCEEDS TO MAKE HIMSELF A DRINK
AS:

BETTY

Tom, I'd like to talk to you about
something.

TOM

Sure. What?

BETTY

Howard and Ed.

TOM

Oh.

BETTY

I don't know quite how to put this...

TOM

Look. If you're worried about me
babbling what I know about them all
over town, forget it. You got nothing
to worry about.

BETTY

Thank you.

TOM

What's to thank me for?

(MORE)

TOM (CONT'D)

What they want to do is their own business
They're not hurting anybody. It's no skin
off my nose.

BETTY

I'm glad you have such a sensible attitude.
about it. Not too many people do, you know.

TOM

Yeah, well, the way I figure it, there's
enough trouble in the world without going
around making more for innocent people.
Life's tough enough the way it is.

BETTY

I've never heard it expressed more
sensitively -- or intelligently.

TOM

Thanks. What they're doing appalls me,
but that's their choice.

BETTY DECIDES NOT TO FIELD THAT ONE.

TOM (CONT'D)

As far as I'm concerned, they're okay.
Ed took me in here when I had no place to
go, and it would be some hell of a rotten
way for me to repay him by letting the
word out that he's... the way he is. Good
luck to both of them. Him and Howard.

BETTY

That's very nice of you. I think Howard is
about to start a new life. An entirely
new life.

TOM

You mean he's going straight?

BETTY

I think so. At least I hope so. I think he's beginning to understand that he isn't really... the way he is. I think he's just been confused. I've always thought so. I've always felt he just needed to find some woman who could bring out the real person in him.

TOM

He's latched on to somebody then?

BETTY

I think so, yes.

TOM

Well, great. Somebody in Fernwood?

BETTY

Uh huh.

TOM

Who? Anybody I know?

BETTY

Somebody you know very well.

TOM

Yeh? Who?

BETTY

Mary.

TOM

Mary? You mean Mary Hartman? My Mary?

BETTY

Yes, Tom. She's a warm, understanding person, and they've obviously established a good, solid relationship.

TOM

Hey, wait a minute. You don't mean Mary and Howard are going to --

*

BETTY

It would be a beautiful thing for Howard.

TOM DOES NOT KNOW HOW TO COMMENT ON THIS ENORMITY, BUT HE IS OBVIOUSLY VERY TROUBLED.

BETTY (CONT'D)

Are you upset?

TOM

No -- I just feel like I had open-heart surgery.

*

BETTY

I only told you this because you've been so understanding. And I certainly didn't think it would upset you, since you say there's no chance you and Mary will ever reconcile. After all, if she...

TOM

(INTERRUPTS, IN TOO MUCH PAIN TO STAY AROUND AND HEAR ANY MORE) Look, if I could just have my laundry...

BETTY

All right, Tom. I'll get it. Of course.

BETTY EXITS INTO INTERIOR ROOM.
TOM PICKS UP THE BOOZE BOTTLE, TAKES
A BIG SLUG, PUTS BOTTLE DOWN, STARTS
TO EXIT, COMES BACK, PICKS UP THE
BOTTLE, MAKES GOOD HIS EXIT.

SFX: DOOR OPENS AND CLOSES -- OFF

BETTY ENTERS WITH NEATLY WRAPPED
LAUNDRY.

BETTY

Tom? (REALIZES HE'S GONE) I'm sorry,
but my first duty is as a mother.

FADE OUT.

ACT TWOSHUMWAY KITCHEN - SIMULTANEOUS

BILLY, AT TABLE, WATCHES AS MARTHA DOES AN INDIAN DANCE, COMPLETE WITH VOCAL EFFECTS. AFTER WHICH:

MARTHA

How's that?

BILLY

Not. bad. You're really getting into it.

MARTHA

I guess we Indians have natural rhythm, too. Of course, I'm only half Indian, so I suppose it'll take me a little longer to learn.

BILLY

You're doing fine. I'm proud of you.

MARTHA

Thanks, Daddy. Oh, it's so exciting, learning how to be an Indian. Of course, I am already an Indian, or at least half an Indian, but I have to learn how.

BILLY

Yes, there's a lot to learn, Martha.

Us Choctaws have a long, proud heritage.

MARTHA

What does that mean, "long, proud heritage"? Is that that pigtail you're wearing?

BILLY

No, it means our history and traditions. This pigtail is part of the tradition, though.

MARTHA

Oh, that's good. I was afraid maybe you were a hippie. Do we Choctaws have hippies?

BILLY

You can't make generalizations about us any more than you can about other groups of people, Martha. Swedish people, black people, Catholic people, French people, whatever. We're people. Some good, some bad, some in between.

MARTHA

I see. Well, tell me about some of our other Choctaw traditions.

BILLY

Well, there's head-flattening. A flat head is one of the trademarks of a Choctaw.

MARTHA

Really? (FEELING HER HEAD) My head
isn't flat. I guess that's because
I'm only half Choctaw. But my head
isn't even half flat.

BILLY

The papooses aren't born with flat
heads, Honey...

MARTHA

Papooses? Is that how you say it?

BILLY

Yeah...

MARTHA

I thought it might be papeese.

BILLY

No, it's papooses.

MARTHA

Was I the only papoose you and
my mother had?

BILLY

Yeah. I'm afraid I only saw your
mother once in my life.

MARTHA

Only once?

BILLY

That's right.

MARTHA

Then that must have been the time
that I was... (LEAVES IT)

BILLY

(FINISHES IT) Conceived. That's right.
When I was young, I guess I was pretty
wild.

MARTHA

(THRILLED) A wild Indian. (SHE HUGS
HERSELF TO CONTROL HER SHIVERS)

BILLY

I guess you could have called me that.
Anyway, I never saw your mother again and
I never knew about your being born.

(MORE)

BILLY (CONT'D)

But I'm glad you and I found each other, Martha. I'm proud to have you for my daughter.

MARTHA

And I'm proud to have a Choctaw for my father. I still love my other father, too, of course. Grandpa Larkin. I hope you don't mind.

BILLY

Not at all. He's a fine man and I can see he's been a good father to you.

MARTHA

Tell me more about us Choctaws. What did you do when you were young? I mean besides being wild and only seeing girls once. I mean before you joined the circus.

BILLY

Well, I guess I was a pretty regular fellow. Maybe you wouldn't think so to look at me, but I was quite a good athlete.

MARTHA

Did you play tennis?

BILLY

Well, no. My game was lacrosse.

MARTHA

I don't think I ever saw lacrosse.

How do you play it?

BILLY

Well, it's kind of like basketball.

Except that instead of throwing the ball and bouncing it, you carry it in a lacrosse stick. That's kind of like a tennis racket with loose strings so you can catch the ball in it.

(PICKS UP A MOP AND DEMONSTRATES) Then when you catch the ball, you can run with it or pass it.

HE FEIGNS PASSING A BALL, SWINGS THE MOP VIOLENTLY, JUST MISSES BRAINING MARY WHO ENTERS. FRIGHTENED, SHE SCREAMS.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Oh, I'm sorry. I was just showing Martha how to play lacrosse.

MARY

Ma, that's a very strenuous game. You're much too old to play. Believe me.

MARTHA

I didn't know you knew anything about lacrosse.

MARY

Tom used to play a little bit when we were in high school.

(MORE)

MARY (CONT'D)

When he wasn't playing basketball or baseball. He used to be a wonderful athlete. It's just criminal what he's doing to his body, with all that drinking. I think alcohol dissolves the muscles.

BILLY

Well, like I told you, Mary, if you want to get him to stop, you have to resort to drastic measures.

MARY

I did. I kicked him out. I guess that's as drastic as a person can get. And now I feel terrible. Maybe a person gets used to kicking people out if she does it often enough. But I never kicked anybody out before, and I feel just terrible.

BILLY

You did the right thing, Mary. That's the only way Tom's ever going to come to his senses. It's the only way you could help him.

MARY

Are you positive? I mean, maybe I should have helped him by helping him. You know, with hot coffee and cold showers and pamphlets.

BILLY

No, Mary. Believe me.

MARY

But he has no place to go. No job.
Nothing. Haven't I got a responsibility?
I promised to honor him. You know:
love, honor and obey. Is that an
honorable thing to do? Kick him out?

BILLY

Mary, he's an alcoholic.

MARTHA

Maybe he's not. Maybe he just has a
little problem.

BILLY

No. He's sick. Alcoholism is not just
a drinking problem. It's a disease.

MARTHA

Really? A disease? It's not contagious,
is it?

BILLY

No, it's not contagious.

MARTHA

Well, that's good. Heather is very
susceptible. It would be terrible if
that little child caught alcoholism.
Even before she was old enough to go
in bars.

BILLY

About the only good thing you can say
for alcoholics is they're not contagious.

*

MARTHA

I just hate that word "alcoholic" -- maybe
Tom's only a drunk.

*

MARY

Yes, drunk does sound better. Why is that?
What's the difference, Grandpa?

*

BILLY

You're an alcoholic if drinking interferes
with any major area of your life.

*

MARY

Oh, dear -- I can think of lots of major areas that
Tom's drinking interferes with. Lots
of minor areas, too. Lots. Mostly
major, but many minor.

*

FADE OUT.

ACT THREEJEETERS' MOTEL ROOM - SIMULTANEOUS

JIMMY JOE AND MERLE ARE EATING
HAMBURGERS AND COKES FROM A PAPER
BAG.

JIMMY JOE

Is this what they call "junk food"?

MERLE

We must be thankful for what is provided
by the Lord.

JIMMY JOE

But, Daddy, this wasn't provided by the
Lord. It was provided by Tacorama.

MERLE

We must think of it as manna from Heaven.

JIMMY JOE

Is manna supposed to give you a stomachache?

MERLE

Jimmy Joe, don't be ungrateful. And just
remember that after our big revival
meeting in Chicago, we'll be eating in
fancy restaurants all the time.

JIMMY JOE

I'd rather eat in Mrs. Haggars' house.

(MORE)

JIMMY JOE (CONT'D)

That was a good dinner we had there that night. And she's nice. I like her.

MERLE

She's more than "nice," Jimmy Joe. Much more than nice.

PAUSE. MERLE EATS IN LASCIVIOUS THOUGHT. JIMMY JOE CAN'T STOMACH ANY MORE OF THE JUNK.

SFX: KNOCK ON DOOR

MERLE

See who that is.

JIMMY JOE

Yes, sir.

JIMMY JOE OPENS THE DOOR, ADMITTING LORETTA.

LORETTA

Hello, Reverend, honey.

JIMMY JOE

Hi, Mrs. Haggars.

MERLE

My, this is an unexpected pleasure.

LORETTA

Thank you. I can only stay for a minute, but I got something mighty important that needs to be said. Hello, Merle.

MERLE

I certainly hope you'll stay for more than a minute.

LORETTA

Oh, I'd love to visit with you and the little Reverend, but Charlie's waiting dinner, and I been neglecting by Baby Boy sinful fierce lately.

MERLE

Jimmy Joe, that shoeshine place down the street closes pretty soon. Be a good boy and run my go-to-meeting shoes down to be shined. (GIVES MONEY) Here's some money.

JIMMY JOE

Yes, sir. (PICKS UP PAIR OF SHOES FROM THE FLOOR) Will you be here when I get back, Mrs. Haggars?

LORETTA

I'm afraid not, Reverend.

JIMMY JOE

Well, goodbye then.

LORETTA

Goodbye, Reverend, honey.

JIMMY JOE EXITS.

LORETTA (CONT'D)

That is just the sweetest, dearest child that ever was. No wonder the Lord is always chatting away with him. It must be a joy and a relief for our Heavenly Father after all the sin and evil He has to deal with most of the time.

MERLE

You do have a beautiful mind, in addition to a beautiful... I mean in addition to being a plainly beautiful woman.

LORETTA

Thank you kindly. (SEES REMAINS OF THE MEAL) Is this what Reverend Jimmy Joe's been having for dinner?

MERLE

Well, we don't really have facilities for cooking.

LORETTA

What you two lone people don't have and what you need real bad is someone to do for you.

MERLE

(SIGHS) I know, I know. The richest man is poor indeed less'n he has the admiration and affection of a good woman.

LORETTA

Well, I do hope you find one soon. That Reverend child needs a mother.

MERLE

Yes, indeed.

LORETTA

Merle, I better get to telling you what I come to tell you. This is fierce difficult for me to say, knowing as how I kind of promised and all. But the unpainted truth is that I ain't gonna be able to go to Chicago for your big revival meeting.

MERLE

What? Why not?

LORETTA

Because I'm following the word of the Good Book where it says that a woman's duty is to obey her husband and Charlie says I'm not to go.

MERLE

But, Loretta, we need you.

LORETTA

Oh, I'm sure Reverend Jimmy Joe can preach up a regular storm of a sermon without no help from me.

MERLE

I'm not just thinking about the revivial meeting. I need you. I need the strength you been giving me to fight the spirit of Satan that's got me took.

LORETTA

I been giving that a good thinking over in my head, Merle, and I true believe you've conquered your weakness.

MERLE

Oh, how I wish that was true. But it ain't. Just last night as I was laying in that very bed there when my weakness came on me real bad and my mind was filled with thoughts and pictures of carnal sin.

LORETTA

Oh, Merle, you didn't go back to one of them houses, did you?

MERLE

No. But only because I still had some of the strength left over from the talking and Scripture reading you and I been doing together. But, oh, it was a fierce struggle in that bed last night, and I used up about all the strength I had left and I just know I'll lose the battle with the Devil when I get to Chicago, less'n you're there to keep me to the path. You know, there's a lot more carnal temptation in Chicago than there is in Fernwood.

LORETTA

I'm truly sorry for your pain and anguish, Merle, but Charlie wants me to devote full time to my career of becoming a country western superstar. Which it needs time devoted to on account of my record of Vitamin L ain't showing no signs of hitting the tops of the charts. What I'm saying, Merle, is that this is our goodbye.

MERLE

Loretta, you can't stop your service to the Lord.

LORETTA

Oh, I'll go on serving. I'll go to church regular and I'll finish making them three thousand bicentennial Christmas trees which the proceeds are gonna go to Reverend Jimmy Joe's Worldwide Revival Crusade.

MERLE

Can't you explain to your husband how much you're needed? By Jimmy Joe and by me and by the wicked world?

LORETTA

Merle, I truly hate to say no. to a spiritual request like that, but I gotta go the way the good Lord and my Baby Boy show me. So there's really no more use us talking, I gotta get back home now and do my wifely thing about dinner.

LORETTA IS READY TO GO. DOOR OPENS
AND JIMMY JOE RETURNS WITH THE SHINED
SHOES.

JIMMY JOE

Oh, you're still here. I'm glad.

LORETTA

I'm just leaving, Reverend, honey. And I guess this is goodbye for good. Knowing you has enriched my spirit, and I'll always remember you for that since a thing like that doesn't happen to a girl every day of the week.

(MORE)

LORETTA (CONT'D)

(KNEELS TO EMBRACE HIM LOVEINGLY) Bless
you, Reverend, honey, and the Lord be
with you. Goodbye, Merle.

MERLE RAISES A HAND IN GESTURE OF
BEGINNING PROTEST, BUT LORETTA EXITS.

JIMMY JOE

Isn't Mrs. Hagers gonna be working for
my Crusade any more?

MERLE

She's gonna be doing a lot more than
that, Jimmy Joe. (VERY INTENSE) I make
you a solemn vow. Loretta Hagers is
gonna be your new momma and my new wife.

JIMMY JOE REACTS TO MERLE'S INTENSITY.
MERLE LOOKS EVIL AND DETERMINED.

FADE OUT.

ACT FOURHAGGERS' LIVING ROOM-LATER-NIGHT

EMPTY. DOOR OPENS AND CHARLIE BRINGS
IN A TIPSY TOM.

LORETTA'S VOICE

Charlie? Is that you? I've been wondering
where...

LORETTA, IN APRON, ENTERS FROM KITCHEN AND
CUTS OFF AS SHE SEES THE TWO MEN. CHARLIE
MOVES TOM TOWARD A CHAIR.

CHARLIE

I was on my way back from the market--
he was just sitting on a curbstone.

TOM

(IN A HAPPY, LIGHT MOOD) Toilet paper.
I need some toilet paper right away, Loretta.

LORETTA

(GESTURING TOWARD THE HALLWAY, SPEAKING TO
CHARLIE) Hon, just take him right on into
the little room.

TOM

I don't need the little room. I just
need toilet paper. (THEN PULLING A
POCKET COMB FROM HIS POCKET) I already
got the comb.

CHARLIE

Tom, what are you talking about?

TOM

"Oh, Beautiful, For Spacious Skys" --
that's what I'm talking about. On a comb
and toilet paper. I just heard some guy
play it -- only I can play it better. So
please get me some toilet paper! Or should
I say toilet tissue. I don't mean to be
crude. Get me some toilet tissue. You know,
I never said that before. Toilet tissue!
Sounds sissy, doesn't it? Toilet tissue.

CHARLIE

Tom, listen to me -- you gotta start
straightening yourself out and you gotta
start right now pronto! I picked up some
pamphlets at the Alcoholism Counseling Sessions
at the plant. (HE STARTS LOOKING AROUND FOR THEM)
You seen them, hon?

LORETTA

Charlie, you should never lay nothin' of value
down in this room.

TOM

I don't need any pamphlets. You can't
play a comb with a pamphlet. You gotta
have toilet paper...tissue. (TURNING TO
LORETTA) You're a musician, Loretta --
you understand that, don't you?

LORETTA

Oh, yeh--and a little bit more, too.
I ain't no psychologist or nothin', of
course, but it ain't hard to see you're
carrying on like this because something's
troubling you. And troubling you bad.

TOM

What's troubling me? So, my wife asked
somebody else to marry her. Big deal.
You think something like that troubles
me? What troubles me is that there's no
toilet paper in this house. How about
Kleenex? Only no double ply--or however
much they're plyin' them these days.
The thinner the paper the better, when
you're trying to make music. Right, Loretta?

CHARLIE

Mary did what?

LORETTA

Yeh--what were you saying about Mary?

TOM

I don't want to talk about Mary now.

LORETTA

Then don't say things like you just did.
She could never ask anybody else to marry her.

TOM

Yeh? Well, supposing I told you I got
it from the person's own mother, the
man's own mother told me! Where's my toilet
paper-tissue!?

CHARLIE

Loretta, get him some toilet paper.

(LORETTA HESITATES BUT EXITS) Tom, Mary actually told you she wanted to marry somebody else?

TOM

Not only marry him, but make it with him too! How do you like those apples?

CHARLIE

I don't believe them.

TOM

Who cares what you believe? I'm a musician now -- and a good one... Have you ever heard "Oh, Beautiful, For Spacious Skies" on toilet paper and comb? You'll love it.

LORETTA ENTERS WITH THE TOILET PAPER.
TOM BEGINS FUSSING WITH THE COMB AND
TOILET PAPER.

LORETTA

Tom, you have made a terrible accusation against my best friend in the whole world. Mary is still married to you and her marriage vows is as sacred to her as I am to Charlie!

CHARLIE

Right!

TOM

Yeh? Well, personally, I don't give a damn about marriage vows or anything else but my music!

CHARLIE

Oh, yes you do! You give a damn and you give a big one! Which is why you're carrying on about playing your stupid ten-cent comb, because your heart is breaking.

TOM

My heart is not breaking! (HE BEGINS TO SING) "Oh, Beautiful, For Spacious Skies...

CHARLIE

(INTERRUPTING) Oh, yes it is -- and you got to get it out, Tom. You gotta tell us what the hell is going on.

TOM

No! I'm not telling you anything as long as you think my heart is breaking.

CHARLIE

You're practically in pieces, Tom.

CHARLIE GRABS TOM AND PUSHES HIM AGAINST THE WALL.

Now get it out! Just spit it out!

You'll feel better for saying it!

(HE STILL HOLDS TOM AGAINST THE WALL.)

TOM

Okay, okay. How would you feel if Loretta announced that she was planning to jump into the hay with Howard McCullough??? (BEAT) And I don't feel better for saying it. I only feel better when I sing. (HE SINGS AGAIN) "Oh, Beautiful, For Spacious Skies..."

FADE OUT.

END OF EPISODE #118